

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7014

S E C R E T CAPE TOWN 607

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, SF, WA, PDEV

SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: BOTHA-KISSINGER CONVERSATION

REF: (A) CAPE TOWN 594, (B) STATE 87668, (C) DAR ES SALAAM 1296,

1. CLEMENS KAPUUNO'S ASSASSINATION INCREASES THE ODDS AGAINST SAG ACCEPTANCE OF THE WESTERN PROPOSALS ON NAMIBIA. IF PIK BOTHA, AS HIS AIDES CONTINUE TO IMPLY, HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING, ALBEIT CAUTIOUSLY, TO PROMOTE CABINET ACCEPTANCE OF THE PLAN, THE ASSASSINATION WILL MAKE IT CONSIDERABLY MORE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO DO SO. AT THE SAME TIME, COMING ON THE HEELS OF THE COUNCIL OF NAMIBIA DECLARATION, SAM NUJOMA'S TV INTERVIEW REMARKS ON MAJORITY RULE, AND THE SECRET SWAPO DOCUMENTS OVER WHICH THE SAG HAS MADE SUCH A FUSS, THE TRAGIC ASSASSINATION OF KAPUUNO WILL PROVIDE FURTHER RATIONALIZATION OF ANY SAG DECISION TO MOVE AHEAD UNILATERALLY. THE SOUTH AFRICANS MAY CALCULATE THAT THE KILLING OF KAPUUNO WILL BE A PARTICULARLY TELLING JUSTIFICATION WITH WESTERN AUDIENCES. THE CABINET WILL REPORTEDLY DISCUSS KAPUUNO'S ASSASSINATION IN ITS MEETING TOMORROW (MARCH 29) AFTER BOTHA RETURNS FROM WINDHOEK (CAPE TOWN 603).

2. GIVEN THE NEW FACTOR OF KAPUUNO'S DEATH, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD MOVE AHEAD WITH THE CARTER-CALLAGHAN (OR FIVE POWER
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CHIEFS OF GOVERNMENT) LETTER TO VORSTER SUGGESTED IN REFTTEL (A). THE LETTER COULD BEGIN BY EXPRESSING SHOCK AND DISMAY AT THE ASSASSINATION OF KAPUUNO, BUT STRESS THAT WHOEVER THE PERPETRATORS OF THIS TRAGEDY, HIS DEATH FURTHER UNDERSCORES THE NEED TO FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE FUTURE OF NAMIBIA. IN THIS REGARD, THE MESSAGE COULD STRESS THAT THE WESTERN PROPOSAL IS SHAPED TO PROVIDE A PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT FOR AN IMPARTIAL

ELECTION FREE OF INTIMIDATION AND VIOLENCE BY ANY PARTY. THE MESSAGE COULD ALSO STATE THAT THE WESTERN LEADERS ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE PROPOSAL WILL ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE AND THAT THE WESTERN COUNTRIES WOULD VIEW WITH CONCERN EFFORTS BY ANY FORCE TO DISRUPT A PEACEFUL POLITICAL PROCESS IN NAMIBIA.

3. SINCE DRAFTING THE ABOVE, WE HAVE HAD TIME TO READ AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S CABLE SUGGESTING A WESTERN F ME FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING INNCAPE TOWN (DAR ES SALAAM 1296). THE ADVANTAGES AS WE SEE THEM ARE:

--SUCH A MEETING COULD RECOUP THE SENSE OF MOMENTUM IN SOUTH AFRICA TOWARD AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT WHICH EMERGED FOLLOWING THE NEW YORK TALKS BUT WHICH HAS FADED RECENTLY AND WHICH COULD BE LOST ENTIRELY BY THE ASSASSINATION OF KAPUUNO.

--THE DRAMATIC GESTURE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS COMING TO SOUTH AFRICA WOULD NOT NECESSARILY DISSUADE THE SAG FROM PURSUING THE INTERNAL COURSE BUT IT COULD GIVE PAUSE TO THE LEADERSHIP. IT WOULD AT LEAST UNDERCUT THE PLAUSIBILITY OF SOUTH AFRICA GOING IT ALONE.

--IF BOTHA IS INDEED WORKING ON BEHALF OF A SETTLEMENT, THE MEETING WOULD STRENGTHEN HIS HAND, PARTICULARLY IF THE FIVE FOREIGN MINISTERS COULD INVOLVE OTHER CABINET MINISTERS IN DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE AS AMBASSADOR YOUNG SUGGESTS.

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--IT COULD ALSO PROVIDE THE MINISTERS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR FACE-TO-FACE DISCUSSION WITH VORSTER, WHO IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS IS THE DECISION MAKER.

--FINALLY, IT WOULD DRAMATIZE THE WESTERN COMMITMENT TO FINDING A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN NAMIBIA.

4. FOREMOST AMONG THE DISADVANTAGES ARE:

--THE PROBLEMS OF GETTING ALL FIVE WESTERN FOREIGN MINISTERS TO UNDERTAKE SUCH A MISSION.

--THE POSSIBILITY THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE MISINTERPRETED BY SWAPO AND THE FRONT LINE UNLESS COUNTERVAILED IN SOME FASHION. (THE NEGATIVE IMPACT COULD BE OFFSET IF THE FIVE FOREIGN MINISTERS ON THEIR RETURN STOPPED OFF IN LUSAKA TO TALK TO SAM NUJOMA.)

--THE POSSIBILITY THAT VORSTER MIGHT RESPOND TO THE FOREIGN MINISTERS WITH AN OUTRIGHT REJECTION, THUS UNDERSCORING THE DEFEAT FOR THE WESTERN INITIATIVE.

--VORSTER MIGHT TRY TO USE THE VISIT TO TRY TO BARGAIN WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTERS ON BILATERAL RELATIONS, MOST PARTICULARLY REGARDING WESTERN ATTITUDE TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA'S DOMESTIC POLICIES.

5. FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT THE DESIRE TO HEAD OFF MOVES BY THE SAG IN THE DIRECTION OF AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD BE HARD TO UNDO TENDS TO OUTWEIGH WHAT I AM SURE ARE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS OF TRYING TO GET FIVE FOREIGN MINISTERS TO COME TO CAPE TOWN ON A MISSION WITH UNCERTAIN PROSPECTS. THE DRAMA OF SUCH A VISIT IS MORE LIKELY TO DETER SOUTH AFRICA'S PLUNGING AHEAD INTO AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT THAN A SET OF LETTERS, ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT OF COURSE GUARANTEE TURNING VORSTER AWAY FROM THIS COURSE INDIFINITELY, UNLESS SWAPO CAN BE BROUGHT TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL SO THAT THE FULL
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WEIGHT OF DISREGARDING THE WESTERN EFFORT FALLS SQUARELY ON SOUTH AFRICA.

6. IF IT SEEMS ADVISABLE TO ATTEMPT THE FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN CAPE TOWN, A PROPOSAL TO THAT EFFECT COULD EASILY BE COMBINED WITH THE PROPOSED LETTER.

7. PLEASE PASS THIS MESSAGE TO ANDY YOUNG AND DON MCHENRY.
BOWDLER

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